1/20/72

Jerry and Howard only,

It was good to see Gary again after all the time since his last visit, and better to see how he had grown into maturity. It was also good to be able to talk things out with him at length after all the letter-writing, especially of recent months. He had hoped to meet Howard and to get to New York, but the red tape of the professional red-tape cutters fouled up his schedule. He had to go back to Phila on business, not pleasure, and has to leave there tomorrow a.m.

One thing that has gradually been growing on me has become more fixed, especially because Gary suggested it, recalling how I had said I was determined to do it several years ago. I am going to restrict my correspondence still further, to eliminate entirely, to the degree that is possible, those who, regardless of my liking and respect for them, are not actively working now. The past is no better than that. If this includes fine people whose work we need, it also means that I have to take time from work I am doing and they are not, work that it bugs me not to get done, to have accumulate, and as I have come to realize, it bugs me more when they mess into things they no longer understand, and I don't need any more disturbances to cope with.

For all practical purposes, of those you know this means that for the most part I will be confining myself pretty much to correspondence with the two of you and Hoch. In some ways I had already begun to streamline a bit, to eliminate minor things that over a period accumulate into time that could be used for other purposes. This is why I'm using the small scraps of paper trimmed off after photocopying where there is no need for me to keep a record. Besides, my files are so overstuffed I've had to remove some not active and put them in boxes I hope I can find if I need them.

A self-styled byt non-productive critic wrote me this week with a bunch of foolish questions about Lattimer and that thing. I didn't answr it and I won't. Neither of you knows him. He is in England. Gary and I had both written him that we just don't have time for what he seems not to realize is silliness. This time I am ignoring it. I got a letter from Cyril Tuesday that I regard as non-responsive. I am not going to answer it, as he has so often not answered some of mine. (Gary agrees it is non-responsive, by the way, for I had sent him a copy of my letter.)

There are subjects on which I am going to discontinue my interest, at least for filing, which takes time and space. These are not things of interest to you but what I have been collecting in the hope of finding others with interest.

So, unless I specify otherwise, I'll be expecting that whatever I send you, either, is restricted to the two of you. I just want to avoid any kind of needless involvement and I do not want to have to concern myself with what you may dow with it. I know some of us better than you, and I do expect this.

Although Gary had no professional relationship with Ned, he has seen enough of Ned to be able to form some opinions. While I did not solicit these and he did not offer them, I am now satisfied that I was right in my expressed concern, that he has some kind of emotional problem. I think you should be aware of this in the event he is in touch with you. It is not any one thing Gary said, and we did not discuss Ned as such. It is the accumulation of little bits and pieces that persuade me. I had seen what I took to be such signs when he was here, and I had thought before the last time. My own and entirely non-professional opinion is that in part it comes from being born into wealth, in part because having this wealth he has come to lack faith in the establishment, perhaps a kind of guilt feeling not recognized because

of the unearned wealth and a kind of ostentation in his life while others have needs they cannot meet, and because of these things a kind of lack of identity, of belonging maybe, an unrecognized feeling that he is in some kind of limbo between the two worlds which may cause him to have a longing for something to which he can attach himself. I do not pretend competence as a shrink, and I attribute no evil intent to ~~im~~ him, believing the opposite. But I am certain that he has some kind of emotional problem or problems and while neither of you is of a type I would expect to do or say what could hurt him, I feel that for whatever it is wroth I should relay this caution. He was, by the way, in touch with some of "the other side" long ago, before he met me, Gary said, and only in search of fact, nothing sinister. He talked to Specter, for example, and the little thing that Specter did that gave Ned permanent doubts is to recommend Sparrow's tiny thing as the best work against the critics. To ned, this was to say that there was no scholarly antiOcritic work, thathif this little bit was the best, and Sparrow didn't even have footnotes (in which, I presume, Ned places great store), then there was no real case against the critics, hence some of his doubts were resolved.

With the kind of thing I am into in some areas, things a bit touchy, I will feel better if you keep the idle chatter from troubling Mr Bell. This is not a business for idle chatter, anyway. Gossipping is for the back fence. Please try and remember the precept of the spooks, learned after long, hard, bitter and sometimes killing experience, that on things that can by any stretch of the imagination be touchy or delicate, the basis is need to know. Howard does notknow as much as Jerry about the reaction by Graham to what I had sent him. He did phone yesterday, he was informative, and when I can get to it I'll let MR know what I can. Meanwhile, if you have to bat your gums, there are always girls.

Otherwise, there is nothing new. I've not quite caught up on accumulated filing but hope to so I can resume regular work tomorrow.

Best,